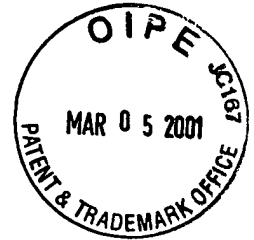


Application Entitled: VARIABLE BUOYANCY BUOY FOR MOORING MOBILE OFFSHORE
DRILLING UNITS
Serial No.: 09/305,205
Filed: 05/07/99
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In the Claims:

Please amend the claims as follows:

1 30. (Twice amended) For use in a mooring line extending from the sea floor to the sea surface, a variable buoyancy buoy comprising:

- a frame having first and second ends;
- a first buoyancy member mounted on the frame;
- a second buoyancy member removably mountable on the frame to selectively change the buoyancy of the buoy when being used onsite;

C means for securing the second buoyancy member on the frame; and

means located at the first and second ends of the frame for securing the buoy in the mooring line.

2 31. (Twice amended) The variable buoyancy buoy according to Claim ¹30 further characterized by a plurality of second buoyancy members each removably mountable on the frame to selectively change the buoyancy of the buoy, and the means for securing the second buoyancy members in engagement with the frame.

4 32. (Amended) The variable buoyancy buoy according to Claim ³31 wherein the frame includes a shaft extending through the first buoyancy member, a fixed plate comprising one end of the frame and secured to the shaft in engagement with the first buoyancy member, and a second plate comprising the opposite end of the frame and selectively engageable with the shaft for securing a selected number of the [variable] buoyancy members in engagement therewith.

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⁵
~~34.~~ (Amended) The variable buoyancy buoy according to Claim ⁴~~33~~ wherein the [retaining] securing means comprises a fastener extending through the second plate and the shaft for securing the second plate and the variable buoyancy members in engagement with the shaft.

⁶
²~~35.~~ (Twice amended) A variable buoyancy buoy comprising:
a frame having first and second ends;
a first plate securably mounted to the first end of the frame;
a second plate selectively positionable along the frame between the first and second ends of the frame;
a first buoyancy member mounted on the frame adjacent to the first plate; and
a second buoyancy member removably mountable on the frame between the first buoyancy member and the second plate, whereby the second plate is selectively positioned along the frame proximate the second buoyancy member when being used in operation to change the buoyancy of the buoy.

¹²
³~~40.~~ (Amended)[The variable buoyancy buoy according to Claim 35] A variable buoyancy buoy comprising:

a frame having first and second ends;
a first plate securably mounted to the first end of the frame;
a second plate selectively positionable along the frame between the first and second ends of the frame;
a first buoyancy member mounted on the frame adjacent to the first plate; and

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a second buoyancy member removably mountable on the frame between the first buoyancy member and the second plate, whereby the second plate is positioned along the frame proximate the second buoyancy member[.], wherein the frame further comprises a shaft [includes] including a plurality of spaced apart holes along at least a portion of [the] a length of the shaft that receive a fastener extending through the second plate such that the second plate may be positioned in a plurality of locations along the shaft.

Remarks

It is respectfully submitted that the amendments set forth above are proper for entry into the application after the final rejection, as such amendments place the application in a condition for allowance or, in any event, in a better condition for appeal. It is further deemed that no new subject matter has been added, and no new search should be required by the amendments.

Entry of the amendment is respectfully requested and reconsideration and favorable action passing the application to issue based upon the amendments and remarks set forth herein are respectfully requested.

Applicant has amended the specification to conform the reference to "buoy 54" to be consistent throughout the application. Similar conforming amendments have been made in drawing Figs. 10 and 12.